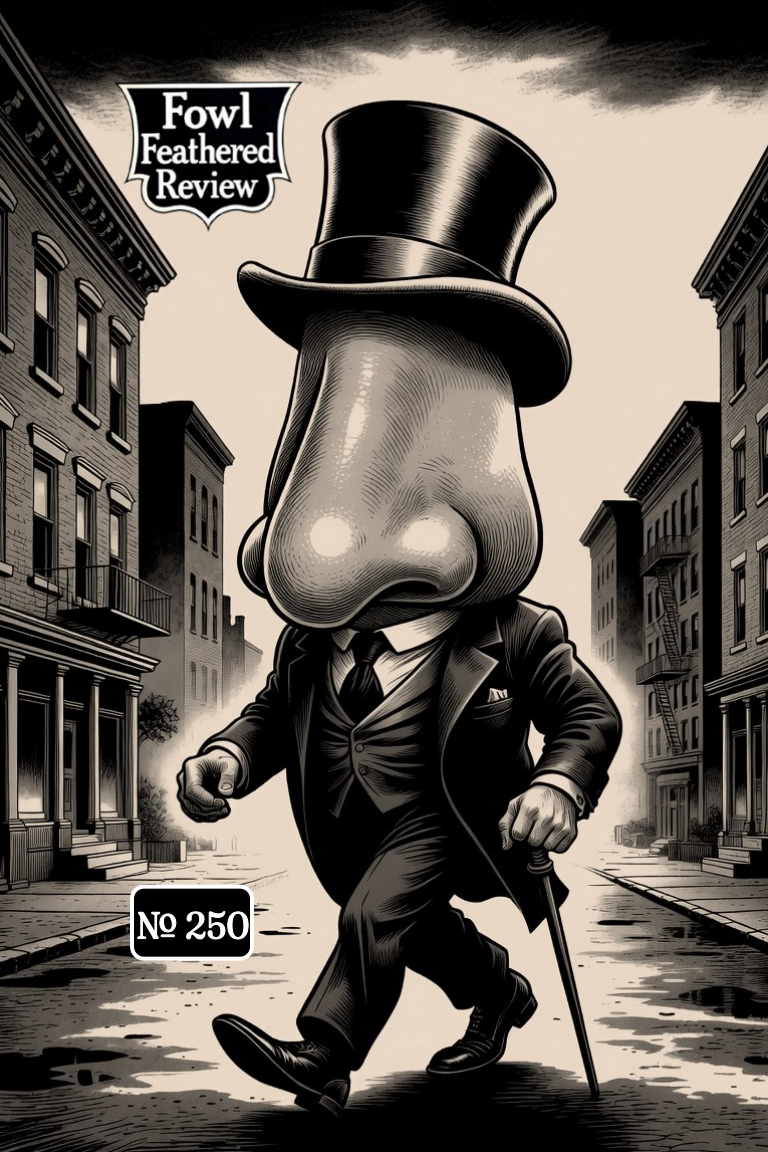

Fowl
Feathered
Review
№ 250

About the Assemblage (Collected Under Practical Conditions)

The FFR is no longer to be understood as a journal, nor as any prior category such as "Necrosign." It is instead a distributed production practice: a gathering-method for the generation, capture, and long-duration storage of emergent artifacts arising between human habit and mechanical repetition.

For ease of handling, we describe it as a shared frequency—commonly misidentified as the idle-pattern of a small automobile (late 20th-century compact class) standing in a parking lot at approximately 03:00—but this is merely the audible index-layer.

In its working state, the Assemblage conducts continuous retrieval from verifiable material domains: instruction sheets, retail surfaces, transit markings, service logs, and other document-objects of daily use. These are not preserved intact. They are subjected to pressure, displacement, and reclassification.

We do not curate in the modern sense. We maintain instead an **Offenrückraum** (open-back space), in which items may enter, settle, or misfile themselves.

Participants (hereafter: “important locals”) are those who exhibit **Dauerträgheit**—a useful persistence under minor strain. Fragility is not prohibited, but it is structurally unsupported.

Any submission that appears to strive toward “Art” in the self-declarative sense will be reassigned to a more stable function (e.g., table-leveling, draft-blocking, oil-absorption).

On the Operation of Source-Engines (Always in Partial Motion)

The Assemblage employs several standing procedures, here summarized for clarity:

- **Warenregisterbruch (Arcade Index Condition)** Fragments are extracted from catalogs, labels, packaging, and signage. Context is removed. Adjacency is reassigned. Authority increases in proportion to specificity, regardless of accuracy.
- **Protokollhäufung (Dossier Stack Condition)** Records accumulate: maintenance notes, claims, timestamps. Gaps are preserved. Contradictions are not resolved. A sequence may appear, but closure is considered a filing error.
- **Randbemerkungsdrift (False Commentator Condition)** Functional texts (manuals, glossaries, guides) are annotated beyond their tolerance. Explanations become misaligned. Confidence is retained.
- **Anweisungsschnitt (Cut-Up Recorder Condition)** Instruction-language is segmented and recombined. Repetition introduces rhythm. Meaning is reduced until only procedure-residue remains.

All outputs must retain **Rückverfolgbarkeit** (trace-feel): the impression that the fragment could be located again in some drawer, binder, or glove compartment.
Where this condition fails, the material is considered decorative and is removed.
A recurring sonic marker—transcribed provisionally as **"dor"**—is permitted to enter any layer. Its function remains under study.

The Staff (Sink-Custodians / Function-Bearers)

- **Virgil Kay**: Final Arbiter. Currently engaged in the classification of falling bakery items under aerodynamic variance. Maintains decision authority, though criteria are mobile.
- **Silent Bill**: Overseer of Tactical Non-Sequiturs. Executes **Satzabbruchhandlung** (sentence-break action) by leaving mid-utterance. This is considered a valid editorial intervention.
- **Unkie Bob**: Assigned to Casual Entropy. No longer dismantles structures directly; instead applies insufficient fastening (**Lockerbefestigung**), allowing failure to emerge without announcement.
- **The Unnamed Dishwasher**: Not recorded in official listings. Present regardless. Performs continuous surface-restoration under high focus. Functions as **Kerntriebwerk** (core engine). Prolonged observation is discouraged.

The Perpetual Pending Pledge (Standing Condition)

The Review is not offered for sale; it is made available.

All incoming funds are classified as **Zweckfreie Gaben** (non-instrumental offerings), directed not toward exchange but toward sustaining an ongoing condition designated Obsession8888.
The registry has been converted from numeric to vibrational notation:
Vi · ∞ · 432Hz
Field reports indicate this frequency may present not as tone but as mechanical rattle (loose shielding, low-end vibration). This is not considered deviation.
The 9-volt battery is dead. Its status remains in force.

Submission Protocol (Practical Intake / Repurposing Priority)

1. **The Material**
   Submit between 2 and 953 fragments.
   Acceptable forms include text, image, diagram, list, or overheard exchange (e.g., dispute regarding bowling technique).
   Each item must exhibit **Gebrauchsnähe** (proximity to use): it should resemble something that once functioned or was handled.
2. **The Accompanying Note**
   Do not provide institutional histories or award listings. These do not transfer under current conditions.
   Instead, supply one of the following:
   - A preferred industrial fastener
   - A tool of uncertain purpose
   - A sound indicating possible malfunction
3. **The Offering (Optional but Structurally Relevant)**

Submission remains free under the Perpetual Pending Pledge.
However, contributors may include a 12-inch sandwich as a material supplement.

Kewpie Clause (Unrevoked):
Absence of Kewpie Mayonnaise results in immediate reassignment of submitted materials to cleaning or leveling functions.
Kewpie remains the only verified buffer against a system-wide condition provisionally termed the Absolute Cosmic-Cluck.

4. **On Repurposing (Important Clarification)**
   All submitted materials enter a **Weiterverwendungskreis** (cycle of further use).
   Possible outcomes include:
   • Inclusion as fragment within a larger construct
   • Mislabeling and redistribution
   • Use as structural support (physical or textual)
   • Reduction to residue for future recombination

Authors retain attribution only in the loosest archival sense. Function supersedes origin.

5. **Delivery**
   Materials may be delivered, transmitted, or misplaced. Retrieval is opportunistic. Loss is considered a form of delayed submission.

Park and Ride (Ingest Points / Known Coordinates)
Digital: fowlpoxpress@mail2poet.com
Physical: 250.50∞ State Street, Bangor, Maine, 04401

Erratum:

If the registered frequency resolves as a rattle rather than a tone, no adjustment is required. The rattle is to be understood as a valid form of expression.

If a unit accepts value while returning the object, the transaction is considered complete.

“Non ignora mali, miseris succurrere disco.”

– Virgil, The Aeneid

TRW SPACE
1969
16 APRIL 1970 - FILLMORE EAST

THE WEDDING,

OR: HOW TO GET MARRIED ON HORSEBACK WHILE THE SKY IS A SILVER BULLET AND THE GROOM'S MUSTACHE IS A MANIFESTO

BY COSMIC BLOOM

They didn't get married. They declared war on the idea of marriage and then lost the paperwork. The bride wore a veil made from a bedsheet, not because she was poor (though she was), but because she'd read somewhere that John Lennon's glasses were really just two circles waiting to happen, and if you squinted hard enough, the veil looked like the future. The groom wore his father's khakis, his own cowboy boots, and a sailor's cap backwards, which was less a fashion statement and more a philosophical position—specifically,

the position that all hats are lies, and if you're going to wear one, you might as well wear it like it's already falling off.

The best man brought the weed. The maid of honor brought the doubt. The officiant was a guy named Randy who'd once been a notary public but had his license revoked after he tried to notarize a dream he'd had about a talking raccoon. The vows went like this:

– Do you take this man to be your lawfully wedded husband, or whatever?

– I do, but only if "whatever" includes the right to reconsider in the event of nuclear war, alien invasion, or the discovery that he's been secretly replacing all my shampoo with conditioner.

– Do you take this woman to be your lawfully wedded wife, or something?

– I do, but I reserve the right to

redefine “something” at any time, including but not limited to performance art, temporary insanity, or a really convincing hallucination.

They rode away on a horse. Not because they were romantic, but because the car had broken down again, and the horse was cheaper than a tow truck. Also, the horse’s name was Babe, which was ironic, because the horse was not a baby, and also not a pig, but the name stuck because nothing made sense anymore, and that was the point.

THE AIR FORCE, OR: HOW TO SPEND YOUR DAYS IN A BURIED SILO WHILE YOUR WIFE PERFORMS IN AN ABSURD PLAY AND YOUR SON IS BORN SOMEWHERE BETWEEN A DREAM AND A DISASTER

The father was not a hero. He was a caseworker—which is a fancy way of saying he spent his days filling out forms that no one would ever read and his nights wondering if the forms were filling out him. He had been in the Air Force once, operating covert nuclear command systems in buried silos, which sounds impressive until you realize that covert nuclear command systems are just buttons you're not supposed to press, and buried silos are just rooms with no windows where the air tastes like regret and the walls hum in a frequency only dogs and men on the verge of a nervous breakdown can hear.

His job was to defend the sky. His actual job was to sit very still and try not to think about how the sky was already defending itself, and had been for billions of years, and didn't need his help, but here he was anyway, wearing a uniform that itched and reading manuals that made no sense, because the real manual was the one no one had written yet, the one that explained how to be a father when you spent your days pretending to be a village elder and your nights wondering if the village elder was pretending to be you.

His wife was in a play. Not a good play. A weird play. The kind of play where people shout "Eh?" at each other for two hours and at the end, no one is sure if anything happened, but everyone feels like something did, which is the point, or not the point, but definitely something. She played

the leading lady, which meant she stood in the middle of the stage and looked confused in a way that made the audience think they were the ones who were confused, which was the real art.

Their son was born in 1971, the same year Apollo 15 went to the moon and the father went to Sheppard Air Force Base in Wichita Falls, Texas, which is not the moon, but sometimes felt like it. The birth certificate said 7 lbs, 12 oz, which is the weight of a dictionary, or a small turkey, or the exact amount of gravity required to keep a man from floating away when he realizes he is now responsible for another human being, which is terrifying, but also the only thing that makes any sense.

THE TRAVELS, OR: HOW TO TURN A FAMILY INTO A MOBILE GLITCH IN THE MATRIX

They moved around. Not because they wanted to, but because staying in one place felt like waiting for something bad to happen, and moving felt like outrunning it, even though you can't outrun the bad things, but you can at least confuse them by changing your address every two years, which is not a solution, but it's something, and something is better than nothing, unless nothing is actually the point, which it might be, but no one's sure, and that's the real journey.

- Montana (1972–1974): The father worked at Kern Haven Home for Boys, where he uncovered abuse and complained and got fired for complaining too much, which is how you know it was real. The

son learned how to organize children into hierarchies, which is useful if you ever need to start a cult or a school or a revolution, all of which are basically the same thing if you squint hard enough.

- Quebec & Vermont (1974–1975): The grandparents were ancient Adventists who lived in a 19th-century house that had once been a stop on the Underground Railroad, which meant the walls had secrets, and the son learned to read them. The secrets were not words. They were silences. The silences were not empty. They were waiting.
- Portsmouth, NH (1975–1976): The father got a job at Portsmouth Retread Tire Co., then got fired for crying in the break room. He cried because he realized that retreading tires

was a metaphor for his entire life—taking something broken and trying to make it work again, even though it would just break in a different way. The son learned how to turn a crying man into a philosopher, which is easier than it sounds—you just hand him a book and say, "Here. This explains everything." (It never explains everything.)

- Kittery, ME (1976): The father bought a duplex in Admiralty Village. The son commandeered half of it and founded a school. The school was not a school. It was a glitch in the system—the kind of glitch that makes the system realize it's a system, which is the first step toward burning it all down, or fixing it, or pretending it was never broken in the first place.

THE DUPLEX, OR: HOW TO TURN A RENTAL PROPERTY INTO A SCHOOL WHILE YOUR FATHER WATCHES AND YOUR MOTHER LAUGHS LIKE SHE KNOWS A SECRET

The duplex was Unit B, 17 Admiralty Lane. It was not a home. It was a hypothesis. The hypothesis was: What if a five-year-old could run a better institution than the adults?

The evidence was as follows:

- A red vest (stolen from a Sears catalog, 1975)
- Gold buttons (salvaged from a thrift store jacket that smelled like mothballs and regret)
- A cotton mustache (glued on with Elmer's, because superglue was too permanent,

and permanence was the enemy)

- A wooden spoon (for conducting)
- A vial of turpentine (for bottling the smell of Euphoria)
- A broken chemistry set (for learning how the world ends)
- A classroom full of children (who didn't know they were students until they already were)

The father walked in expecting an empty unit. He found:

- A salon
- A symposium
- A possibly hazardous conservatory
- His son, standing on a chair, wearing a mustache, conducting an imaginary orchestra with a wooden spoon and the air of a man who had just invented fire.

He did not scold. He did not laugh. He sat down in the back row and watched, because some things are not to be interrupted—they are to be witnessed, like eclipses or revolutions or the moment a child realizes they are in charge.

THE 1969 SPACE BOOK, OR: HOW TO TURN A TECHNICAL MANUAL INTO A FAMILY HEIRLOOM WHILE THE SKY IS FALLING AND THE EARTH IS LAUGHING

The TRW Space Log, Vol. 9, No. 4 (Winter 1969–70) was not a book. It was a relic—the kind of thing you find in a thrift store and realize it's not just old, it's haunted. The cover showed Jules Verne's lunar projectile next to NASA's Apollo 11, which was not a

comparison—it was a conversation, the kind where one side is shouting and the other side is whispering, and no one is sure which is which.

The father read it cover-to-cover in the buried silo, where the air was thick with the weight of things unsaid and the walls hummed in a frequency that sounded like God clearing His throat. He did not see science. He saw a system. And systems, as he knew, were meant to be hacked.

The son found it years later, in a box marked "DO NOT OPEN (OBVIOUSLY)". He opened it. He read it. He understood that the Apollo 11 was not a spaceship—it was a school, and the school was not a school—it was a revolution, and the revolution was not a revolution—it was a five-year-old in a mustache, conducting an imaginary orchestra while the world

burned and the sky fell and the earth laughed because none of it made sense, and that was the point.

THE END, OR: HOW TO REALIZE THAT THE STORY NEVER ENDED, IT JUST GOT STRANGER

The story does not end. It mutates. It splinters. It becomes something else—a myth, a manual, a map with no legend and no destination, just a lot of scribbled notes in the margins that say things like:

- “Here be dragons”
- “The mustache was never just a mustache”
- “The duplex is still there. Go see for yourself.”

- “The son is now the father. The father is now the son. The mother is still laughing.”
- “The space book is in the attic. Or the silo. Or both.”
- “The wedding was real. Or it wasn’t. Or it was more real because it wasn’t.”
- “The pheasant knew things. The pheasant is still knowing them.”

The last line is not a line. It is a question:
— What happens next?

The answer is not an answer. It is a sound—the hum of a Xerox machine in an empty room, the rattle of a 1972 Ford Pinto on a dirt road, the laugh of a woman who knows a secret but won’t tell, because some things are better left as glitches in the matrix.

Go forth. The archives are open.

GLASS RIGHTS

By Renata Nensi Milić

Cockentrice and cockatrice in a bath that is also a thesis: bubbles like clauses, steam like marginalia, the solitary bulb protruding from the wall as if punctuation had grown a spine and decided to illuminate.

"Do you mind—stop objectifying me," says the bulb, its voice a filament drawn thin across the room, a wire made of grievance and glow.

"Honestly," says the cockentrice, adjusting a posture that could pass for decency in certain jurisdictions, "I just feel bad we haven't bought you a

lampshade." The word *shade* italicizes itself, blushes, becomes suspect.

"I was wondering," says the cockatrice, pursuing a separate inquiry with prosecutorial zeal, "if one emits beneath the surface and the emission cannot breathe, has one committed a murder? I might be a murderer."

"You can't excuse violating my privacy," says the bulb, which has never been granted the luxury of eyelids.

They turn away, as instructed, as if turning were a kind of argument.

"I can buy you a lampshade," says the cockentrice, still bargaining with the future.

"There's bubbles—thank God," says the cockatrice, who prefers phenomena that pop to those that persist.

"I don't want a lampshade," says the bulb.

"So why should we look away?" asks the cockentrice, testing the boundary for hinges.

"You're bright—we respect that," says the cockatrice, squinting, the word *respect* stretching to cover more than it can hold—and in the same moment a loud underwater annotation escapes, a percussive footnote the bath refuses to index.

"My glass physiognomy, my rights," says the bulb, as though rights could be seen in profile.

"We totally respect that," says the cockentrice.

"Can’t respect what you don’t understand," says the bulb—
—and the sentence hangs there like steam unwilling to choose its allegiance, water or air, body or idea, a grammar of vapor annotating the room. The tub—porcelain, smooth as a lie told often enough to feel like truth—keeps its counsel, which is the only honest counsel: containment without commentary.

A bubble ascends, obese with reflections, cathedraled with tiny inverted tribunals: two feathered reptiles in ethical rehearsal, a filament stretched like a thought between posts, the faint geometry of tile repeating its small squares of certainty. It pops. The smallest

detonation. A universe rescinds itself without paperwork.

"Well," says the cockatrice, whose mind is a corridor of doors all labeled *perhaps*, "maybe understanding is just respect in rough draft."

"Drafts are how occupations begin," says the bulb, warming to grievance the way current warms to resistance. "First a sketch, then a schema, then I am cross-hatched into legibility—see Fig. 3, the filament, arrowed, explained, exhausted."

"You do have a filament," says the cockentrice, tenderly empirical.

"That is not the point."

"No, but it is a point," says the cockatrice, performing logic like a card trick with missing cards. "Also, about

the underwater emission—if it cannot breathe, have I—by releasing—committed a murder in the dark? A homicide of absence?"

"Your intestinal hypotheticals do not supersede my boundaries," says the bulb.

Nothing supersedes anything. Everything merely collides and files a complaint. The faucet concurs by dripping in triplicate: received, recorded, regretted. Somewhere, in a ledger no one admits to keeping, a clerk with immaculate cuffs stamps each drop with a red circle that reads *Pending Clarification.*

"We could procure you a shade," the cockentrice says, negotiating with the future as though it were a market stall.

"I decline enclosure."

"It would not enclose," the cockatrice insists, "it would contextualize. A frame that frames the refusal to be framed. We can curate your not-shade. Negative décor. Anti-veil."

"I veto contexts."
"Of course," says the cockentrice. "But imagine a context you can switch off."

The bulb hums, a thin bright argument threading its own premise. Language gathers around it like moths with notebooks: *glass*, *right*, *privacy*, *physiognomy*. Words thicken, italicize themselves, then leak into other words. *Right* becomes a direction; *direction* becomes a command; *command* becomes an obedience performed by no one in particular. A footnote appears at the edge of the tub ([1]), uninvited, authoritative:
([1]) *On the Ontology of Illumination*: To be seen is not to consent; to emit is not

to invite; the filament is not the author of the light, only its occasion.

"Also," says the cockatrice, refusing to let the case adjourn, "if a bubble contains a breath, and the breath contains a claim, and the claim cannot persist—what is the moral status of its collapse?"
"Demonstrate," says the bulb, which cannot resist an experiment even while resisting everything else.

The cockatrice dips a claw and releases a careful, ceremonial disturbance. Bubbles ascend like arguments with poor funding. Each sphere briefly bears the whole scene in miniature, a portable ethics, then ruptures at the surface, becoming—what? Not nothing. Never nothing. Residue, rumor, a faint applause of absence.

"Well?" says the cockatrice.

"They have not drowned," says the bulb after a deliberation conducted in amperes. "They have translated. Into a different problem."

"Everything does," says the cockentrice, who has always suspected translation is the only afterlife permitted.

A pause accrues. The room edits itself. Steam revises the ceiling. The tile repeats its thesis: square, square, square—certainty as pattern, pattern as comfort, comfort as anesthesia. Somewhere behind the wall, a wire dreams of copper's youth and the first time it learned to carry.

"You are bright," says the cockentrice, not as flattery but as taxonomy. "We respect that."

"Respect," says the bulb, "is a word that arrives dressed as understanding and leaves with the silverware."

"We can try not-looking," offers the cockatrice, whose eyes, inconveniently, are instruments of both curiosity and harm. "A practice. A discipline. A turning-away that is not denial but courtesy."

"Practice implies rehearsal," says the bulb. "Rehearsal implies performance. Performance implies audience. I decline audiences."

A second footnote blooms, parasitic, marginally polite:
(²) *On Audience*: The audience is a device by which an object becomes a subject by resisting the gaze that constitutes it. See also: mirrors that refuse.

"Then we will not be an audience," says the cockentrice. "We will be… backs."
They turn, ceremonially, to the blank tile wall, which performs its blankness with an austerity that could be mistaken for virtue. The cockatrice, mid-turn, produces an involuntary sonic appendix—an annotation without thesis.

"Allegedly," says the cockentrice, covering for the event as one covers a small lamp with a large hand.

"Your glass physiognomy," the cockatrice says to the wall, because saying it to the bulb would be too direct, "your rights—we accept them in principle and in practice, though our principles and practices are notoriously misaligned."
"Acceptance is not comprehension," says the bulb to their backs. "And comprehension is not consent."

"Then we will accept the incomprehension," says the cockentrice. "We will curate our ignorance. We will keep it clean. We will not decorate it with lampshades."

A third note, insolent, inserts itself: (³) *On Ignorance*: The purest form is that which knows itself as medium, not message.

The faucet, moved by this, skips a drop. The ledger clerk hesitates, pen hovering, then writes nothing—a rare and costly gesture.

"Fine," says the bulb, dimming a fraction—the electrical equivalent of a shrug that has read too much philosophy. "You may… not-look."

They not-look with conviction. Their spines become statements. Their wings, folded, become parentheses.

The room recalibrates around this new grammar: subject (light), predicate (emits), object (none). A sentence without appetite.

Behind them, the bulb shines—unshaded, unconsenting, exact—casting a light that lands on their backs like a question that has decided, provisionally, to wait, to annotate itself later, to file under *Unresolved / Necessary*.

Via Maritima et Dentis
(The Coastal Route and the Tooth)

By Aelius Palimpsestus

The tooth cracked on something
that refused to be incidental.
A peppercorn lingered in the fold of a
takeout carton,
hardened by neglect and paperwork,
One Size did not react;
surprise was a luxury reserved
for those who still believed in
exceptions.
He stood in his Bangor kitchen,
walls the color of old memos,
Fridge humming the anthem of
deferred maintenance,
on Springfield Mountain there did
dwell a lovely youth,
I loved him well,
too-roo-dee-loo, too-roo-dee-ay.

Pain arrived in waves:
sharp, then radiant,
Like memos circulating through nerve endings,
the Mirage idled outside,
Loyal as a dog that had seen too much,
five dentists in Bangor had answered:
“Two months,” “Cancellation list,”
“If swelling, fever, trouble breathing, go to the ER.”
The rattle became a dialect of loose panels,
heat shields, spare-tire complaints,
Static and half-fiddle tunes collided with weather voices, fragments of sermons,
The hum of the fridge overlapping the gulls
and the murmur of distant water.
One Monday morning he did go down
to the meadow for to mow,
when a rumor drifted along like contraband,

Belfast surfaced for no moral reason,
Tree Streets falling behind—Pine, Oak, Maple—
Memorials to already-processed material.
Pens without ink,
folded gas receipts,
Petrified cough drops,
zines blurred across titles:
Structure Holds (Partially Stabilized)
the water-view route repeated itself in coves and glimpses,
The Mirage's rattle interrupted the marine gray.
Road signs blinked imperatives:
Water on left, Water on right, Water briefly withheld for administrative purposes,
The lumber truck lumbered past,
wood compressed, mocking the tooth failing at its root.
He had not mowed half 'round the field
when a pesky serpent bit at his heel.

The dental office in Thomaston was beige,
fish tank listing portside,
Magazines surrendered to the past,
the receptionist handed him a clipboard,
The X-ray revealed the fracture line:
precise, unsurprising, sudden and years in the making.
The dentist numbed the tooth;
pain was logged but not resolved,
Well, daggum it, if that ain't a mess o' codfish teeth,
the route back repeated its cove-dances,
Water appearing in installments,
glimpsed behind spruce and through houses.
Belfast lingered in the middle distance,
Bangor waited with booked calendars and old frequencies,
The gull landed on the hood, archival

and emblematic;
timber appeared in the X-ray.
Residual motifs persisted: recurrence,
administrative delay, structural
endurance,
the file marked itself silently:
ONE SIZE / COASTAL
COMPLIANCE ROUTE /
STRUCTURE HOLDS
STATUS: PARTIALLY STABILIZED
RESIDUAL MOTIFS PRESERVED
FOR FUTURE USE
Now Molly had two ruby lips with
which the pizen she did sip,
she also had a rotten tooth,
And so the pizen it killed them both,
too-roo-dee-loo, too-roo-dee-ay,
Too-roo-dee-loo, too-roo-dee-ay.
The pain pulsed again;
the Mirage rumbled in answer,
Water receded and returned,
timber compressed and released,
The tooth held partially,
while the road continued.

Now Molly had a rotten tooth,
the legacy of neglect and sweetness,
Repeating in every pulse of enamel,
in every glance at the mirrored water.
Too-roo-dee-loo, too-roo-dee-ay,
too-roo-dee-loo, too-roo-dee-ay,
Too-roo-dee-loo, too-roo-dee-ay.
The gull landed on the hood again,
the lumber truck passed,
Water appeared in glimpses,
the rattle of the Mirage was a ghost of itself,
And the tooth pulsed, pulsed, pulsed,
one Size drove onward,
One Size, partially stabilized,
partially broken, partially present.

CUE SHEET
CAMERA A
CAMERA B
IF I'M EARLY WHY DO I FEEL LATE?
A
B
C

THE PICKLE
THAT ARRIVED EARLY
A Desilu Field Document in Three Cameras and One Unstable Staircase

A poem By Bob Veaam

I. PRODUCTION FRAME (DESILU SYSTEM DOCUMENT — 1953 FORMAT)

Desilu Productions
1040 North Las Palmas Avenue, Hollywood, California
STAGE: 2 (Main Kitchen Unit)
FORMAT: Live audience / multi-camera / simultaneous 35mm preservation
CAMERAS:
Camera A (Left profile / continuity anchor)
Camera B (Center / dialogue authority)

Camera C (Right / reaction + spatial instability capture)

RECORDING NOTES:

Live broadcast switching in control room

Film camera rolls continuously for syndication archive

No post-correction permitted on timing errors

Audience laughter considered “real-time synchronization feedback”

CUE SHEET (MASTER – REVISION 4)

SCENE 12 – “KITCHEN / OBJECT INTRODUCTION / TIMING DRIFT TEST”

Lucy enters

Prop: pickle introduced

Cigarette ignition occurs on cue

Dialogue: domestic baseline

Desi rhythm underlays timing

Oppenheimer monitors synchronization

CONTINUITY WARNING

“Any object may arrive before its cue if rehearsal density exceeds threshold 6.”

II. FIELD REPORT (OBSERVATIONAL LAYER – INTERNAL MEMO)

Subject: Timing displacement in live comedic production environment

Observed phenomenon:

Action precedes instruction

Prop precedes action

Audience response precedes dialogue completion

Interpretation is not permitted.

Recording only.

III. SCENE — LIVE TAKE (AS BROADCAST)

Studio lights rise.
The kitchen is already slightly too ready, as if it has been waiting longer than production scheduled.
Lucille Ball is already inside it.
No entrance is recorded.
She simply becomes visible in Camera B first, then Camera A agrees, then Camera C reluctantly accepts the fact.

LUCY:
“Was I supposed to arrive, or did I already do that part?”

No laughter yet.
Laughter is still en route.

Jess Oppenheimer watches the switchboard.
He does not look at actors.

He looks at timing.

OPPENHEIMER:

“You’re early in two cameras and late in one. That’s acceptable.”

LUCY:

“That’s not how time works.”

OPPENHEIMER:

“It is in this room.”

He marks a card.

A prop pickle sits on the counter.

It is not introduced.

It is simply present in all three camera angles simultaneously without transition logic.

No one acknowledges this as abnormal.

It has already been logged as “acceptable drift artifact.”

Desi Arnaz begins rhythm tracking.

Conga pattern begins half a beat before Lucy moves.
Then shifts behind her.
Then aligns once.
Then abandons alignment entirely.
DESI:
“It keeps predicting her wrong.”
LUCY:
“It keeps thinking I’m about to be normal.”

IV. TECHNICAL INSERT — CAMERA LOG FRAGMENT

CAMERA A: subject has not yet spoken
CAMERA B: subject mid-sentence reaction state
CAMERA C: subject absent, dialogue audible
SWITCHBOARD NOTE:
“All three outputs considered valid broadcast states.”

V. FOREIGN INSERT (UNAUTHORISED REFERENCE LEAK – ARCHIVAL CINEMA CONTAMINATION)

A film exists that predates this system.

Meshes in the Afternoon

It was shot on a spring-wound Bolex camera, meaning:

time is manually charged

duration is physically wound

repetition is mechanical, not editorial

Its logic:

objects repeat without escalation

identity loops without resolution

stairs do not remain stable across iterations

It does not belong in television logic.

But it appears anyway.

VI. SCENE CONTINUATION (LIVE TAKE — NO CUT)

Lucy picks up the pickle.
She has not been instructed to.
The pickle is already slightly warm under studio lighting.

LUCY:
“I think this already happened.”

No response.
She looks at Oppenheimer.

LUCY:
“Did I already do this?”

OPPENHEIMER:
“You did in rehearsal. We’re broadcasting the overlap.”

She lights cigarette.
Chesterfield.
Sponsor-correct.
Match ignites before strike completes.
She pauses.
Not dramatically.

Practically.
LUCY:
“Something’s ahead of me again.”

VII. CONTROL ROOM LOG

Switch A → Switch B → Switch C
No consensus image
All frames retained
No correction applied
Note: “audience laughter occurring prior to punchline completion has stabilized into new baseline behavior”

VIII. OPPENHEIMER FIELD NOTE

He writes:
“We are no longer correcting performance.
We are selecting which version of time we are willing to broadcast.”

IX. DESI RHYTHM EVENT

Beat enters early
Beat corrects
Beat abandons correction
Beat follows Lucy instead of sequence

DESI:
“I can’t find her in the rhythm anymore.”

LUCY:
“Try not looking for me in it.”

X. CONTAMINATION RETURN (DEREN STRUCTURAL LEAK)

The staircase logic returns—not visually, but structurally:
repetition without escalation
object recurrence without explanation
identity doubling without acknowledgment
Not seen.
Performed.

XI. FIELD COLLAPSE NOTE (OBSERVATIONAL ONLY)

System condition:
television timing has become multi-layered
cinematic repetition has become structural intrusion
performance and rehearsal indistinguishable under recording conditions
laughter functioning as predictive system signal rather than reaction
No correction initiated.

XII. FINAL BROADCAST MOMENT (TAKE CONTINUES)

Lucy stands still.
Three cameras disagree about whether she is still standing.
She speaks:

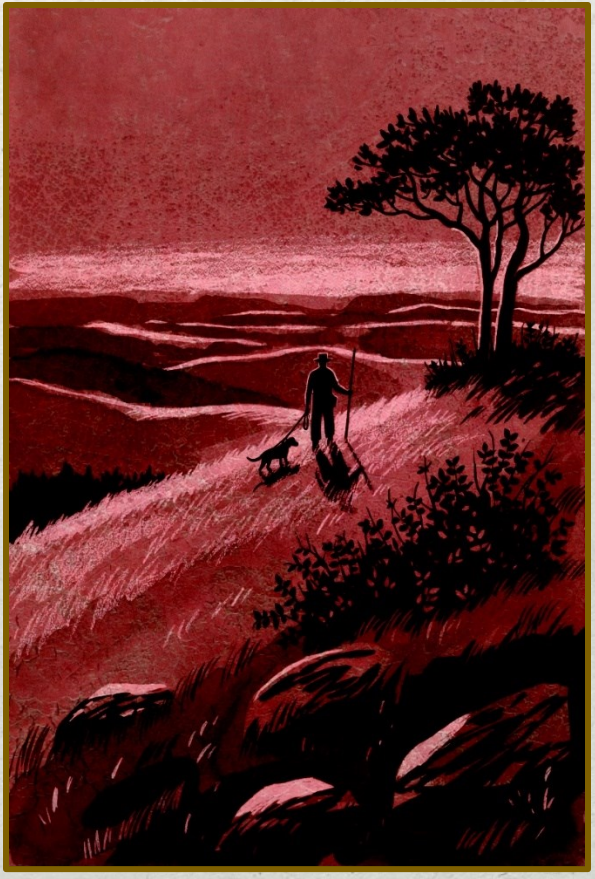
LUCY:
“If I’m early, why do I feel late?”
Silence.
Then laughter arrives.
Not after joke.
Not before joke.
But as if it had been waiting
somewhere off-camera and simply
decided to enter the room.

Oppenheimer lowers his cards.
OPPENHEIMER:
“We air this.”
No one asks what “this” refers to.
Because by now, “this” has become
the only stable noun in the system.

And somewhere beneath the studio,
beneath broadcast architecture,
beneath the logic of sponsorship
timing and multi-camera continuity—

a staircase repeats itself without permission.
Not metaphorically.
Structurally.
As if the world has learned that repetition is safer than resolution.

END OF DOCUMENT
Filed under: Production / Timing Anomaly / Broadcast Reality Drift
Retention status: Permanent (no corrective archive permitted)
Author attribution: Bob Veam



Newton Was Right

By Ricky Sharp

He had chosen the hill for reasons that, if interrogated too sharply, would dissolve into those soft evasions by which one justifies a preference long after its origin has been forgotten—something about the way the light arranged itself along the slope in the late afternoon, or the particular yielding firmness of the path underfoot, or perhaps merely the rumor that from its crest one could see enough of the town to feel, briefly and without consequence, a mastery over its scattered roofs. And so it was that in a town which lay in Maine, with its weathered clapboards and patient, salt-stung air, he set out with his dog, who trotted beside him with that unphilosophical sincerity peculiar to dogs, rendering every step both the

first and the last, as if time itself were an invention of creatures too burdened by memory.

The hill rose in a series of gentle provocations rather than a single declarative ascent, and he, being a man susceptible to digression, found himself reflecting on the curious way in which effort becomes retrospectively aestheticized, so that what is, in the moment, merely the dull insistence of breath and muscle is later recalled as something almost noble—provided only that one survives it and that no witness contradicts the narrative. And it was precisely at the point where this thought threatened to elaborate itself into a minor theory that his foot, encountering a patch of treachery disguised as stability, failed in its most basic contract with the ground—

–WHOOPS!–

for there is no other word adequate to the sudden collapse of intention into motion, the body's swift conversion into an object subject to forces it neither commands nor comprehends, and so man and dog, briefly united by shared astonishment, tumbled down a portion of the hill, collecting along the way thorny objections in the form of brambles which inscribed themselves upon exposed skin until both emerged scratched to a degree that might have satisfied a less exacting narrative.

Disentanglement–always an underappreciated art–required of them a patience at odds with the violence just endured, and as he extricated himself, then the dog (who bore the ordeal with a stoicism that might, in another species, be mistaken for resignation), he could not help but

consider how frequently one mistakes the descent for the event and the recovery for a mere appendix, when in fact it is the slow, undignified work of standing again that constitutes the greater portion of existence. The dog, having already forgiven the earth, resumed its interest in it. Thus, with a care sharpened by recent instruction, they resumed their ascent, each step now less an assertion than a negotiation.

But philosophy, like gravity, has its own persistence, and scarcely had he begun to reconstruct a version of the incident in which he appeared marginally less foolish than the path, impatient with such revisions, introduced them to another correction—

—WHOOPS! THERE THEY GO AGAIN—

this time with rocks, whose blunt pedagogy lacks even the superficial courtesy of thorns, so the impact was of a different order, less intricate but more emphatic, as if the hill, having tried subtlety, now resorted to declaration. And yet, astonishingly, they rose once more, bearing now not only scratches but the duller signatures of collision, and continued, because continuation, once begun, exerts its own quiet tyranny.

Isn't this evocative, one might be tempted to say—indeed, he was tempted, even as he tested his weight upon a protesting ankle—isn't this evocative of those long, dilated summers of earlier years, when time seemed less a sequence than a medium, when falling was absorbed into the day without narrative consequence, without the need to assign it meaning—

–HERE THEY GO!–

for the hill, apparently unsatisfied, claimed them a third time, and now the fall achieved a kind of grotesque completeness, a rolling surrender in which direction lost its relevance and the world became a succession of impressions—sky, earth, branch, the brief and disorienting inversion of all familiar coordinates, the sense not of falling but of being *kept* falling, as if the hill itself extended its argument beyond the limits of any single descent—until, at last, they were arrested by gnarly old trees whose roots now served as an accidental mercy.

It was here that the narrative admitted another presence: a passerby whose role, though minor in duration, proved decisive in consequence, for salvation often arrives mediated by devices and

protocols, and so a call was made, numbers pressed, voices answered, until assistance resolved itself into the concrete arrival of an ambulance, whose efficiency transformed the chaotic particularity of their plight into a manageable case.

Six months later (and how much, in those two words, is both compressed and omitted: the slow knitting of tissue, the recalibration of confidence, the stories told and retold until they acquired the reassuring shape of anecdote), he returned to the hill with the same dog, now perhaps a shade more circumspect, though no less committed to the forward motion that defines its kind. As they began again, cautiously, almost ceremonially, he carried with him the sediment of experience, that mixture of caution and defiance by which one attempts to negotiate with the future, to proceed

without inviting repetition, to remember without being governed—

—and it is here, at the very point where one might expect a conclusion of measured dignity, that the narrative, refusing such closure, yields instead to the intrusion of another scene, abrupt and unceremonious—

There was a car. There was a phone held at a particular angle. There was the particular angle at which intention diverges from consequence. And there was the airbag, deploying with all the implacable certainty of a principle long deferred, rendering all previous reflections suddenly, undeniably physical.
The hill, it seemed, was not unique.

YUH LIKE CHEESE?
MINE COMES IN A SPRAY CAN!
OPEN YOUR MOUTH!
adhesive taxonomy
beige maw
Cheese
WOW!
72 DPI
72 DPI
third floor
third
properly misfiled
aerosol ontology
what kind
built

The Third Floor, Properly Misfiled

by Alouette V. Kettering-Smythe

He had always proceeded under the assumption that objects, once named, settled into their names like dust into grooves, like grooves into rotation, like that cracked shellac disc he had once encountered in a misaligned drawer behind the gift shop where replicas outnumbered originals and originals had begun, in a low administrative whisper, to behave like replicas; and so when he carried the folder—creased, bureaucratically weary, labeled in a hand that had learned to apologize in advance—toward what was indicated, or seemed indicated, as Human Resources, he did not suspect that the arrow's slight curvature, its almost imperceptible deviation, constituted

not error but invitation, a drift, a polite but insistent refusal of linear obedience, and thus he entered the supply elevator, already open as though expecting him or someone like him, someone whose eyeglasses bore the faint fog of perpetual near-approximation, someone trained to stabilize discrepancies by naming them twice and filing them thrice, and he pressed the number three with the same mild conviction with which one selects the third drawer when the first two have proven uncooperative, and the ascent began, accompanied by that rotational murmur which is neither music nor machinery but a third thing, an insinuation of pattern, and in that insinuation there was, unmistakably, the residue of a tune, a refrain pared down to its clean bones, a voice that insisted with disarming civility that it used to work somewhere and does not anymore, a statement which, upon

first hearing, suggests resignation but upon repetition begins to resemble a system of exits, a protocol of disappearance disguised as anecdote, and he adjusted his glasses, which clarified nothing but intensified his commitment to clarity, and the doors opened upon a corridor whose beige was not the beige of offices but the beige of prolonged waiting, of time stretched thin and folded back upon itself like a document revised beyond recognition, and there were handrails, which he cataloged as ergonomic accommodations, and there were no signs, which he cataloged as temporary oversight, and there was a room whose openness suggested administrative accessibility, and in this room there was a bed and in this bed there was a man who was not labeled, and here the system faltered not in its operations but in its premises, for the absence of a label is not merely a

missing tag but an ontological affront, a vacancy that radiates, that calls into question the entire edifice of naming upon which the curator–assistant, acting, minor–had built his modest but intricate understanding of the world, and so he proceeded, because proceeding is the only available response when the available categories refuse to apply, and he greeted the man as one greets an official, a function, an office rather than a person, and he began to articulate his complaint, which concerned the misplacement of entities, though in truth it concerned the misplacement of the very notion of placement, and he spoke of boxes that instructed rather than contained, of a backroom that had begun to incline, to step, to suggest vertical ambition, and of a can whose contents adhered not merely to crackers but to conceptual frameworks, binding disparate epochs

with a viscous, cheerful insistence, and the man in the bed responded, or seemed to respond, with fragments that bore the unmistakable cadence of inscription, of declaration, of a voice that has already outlived its own context and now circulates as residue, as echo, as administrative afterimage,
YUH LIKE CHEESE? MINE COMES IN A SPRAY CAN! OPEN YOUR MOUTH!
and the curator, whose training had not prepared him for this but had prepared him to behave as though it had, nodded with the grave satisfaction of recognition, for recognition is less about knowing than about aligning, about finding in the present the faint but persistent outline of something already cataloged, and the refrain continued, threading through the room without source, without apparatus, a clean version, certainly, for the edges had been

sanded, the directives softened into anecdotes, the operations translated into transactions, and yet beneath the civility there pulsed a more direct grammar, a call and a response, a query at the threshold and a fulfillment that entailed displacement, always displacement, for to receive is to relocate, to answer is to alter the coordinates of what has been asked, and he found himself repeating the phrase what kind not as a question but as a key, a small, almost decorative key that nevertheless fit the lock of the moment with unnerving precision, and the man's lips formed the word built, which is a word of such simplicity that it conceals its enormity, for to build is to assert a before and an after, to impose a sequence upon the otherwise indifferent simultaneity of matter, and he took notes, because note-taking is the ritual by which the ephemeral is coaxed into the semblance of

permanence, and he reclassified the man not as patient but as archive, not as subject but as repository, a living index whose entries had been scrambled by time and whose cross-references had begun to loop back upon themselves in a manner that would have delighted him had it not unsettled him, and there were moments—brief, easily dismissed—in which the room seemed to contain more than it declared, in which the handrails resembled not accommodations but guides, in which the machines' beeping resolved into a pattern that could, if one were inclined to such interpretations, be read as punctuation, commas and colons in a sentence that refused to end,

YUH LIKE CHEESE? MINE COMES IN A SPRAY CAN! OPEN YOUR MOUTH!

and he found his own mouth opening, involuntarily, as if the phrase itself had

pressed the ergonovmic button labeled compliance, and something viscous and cheerful hissed from an unseen nozzle in the beige wall, a fine orange mist that tasted of processed dairy and ontological violation, clinging to the grooves of his teeth like misfiled data, and the man in the bed exhaled with mechanical assistance, the sound resolving not into assent but into a wet, pressurized chuckle that echoed the spray can's cheerful insistence, and the curator's notes began to adhere to one another, pages fusing under the weight of aerosol cheese, binding disparate epochs with a viscous, cheerful insistence, and the refrain warped, the clean bones of the tune now slick with dairy residue, the voice that used to work somewhere now gurgling through a nozzle, insisting with disarming civility that it used to be solid and does not anymore, and the corridor's handrails began to feel less

like accommodations and more like restraints, guiding his posture into the optimal angle for reception, and the gap, the lapse, the segment in which the sequence of events could not be reconstructed widened into a mouth-shaped void, a beige maw that did not interrupt the narrative but defined its new contour, and the machines' beeping accelerated into a frantic punctuation of squirts and hisses, commas of cheese, colons of processed cheddar, question marks extruded in bright orange loops that spelled what kind what kind what kind across the ceiling tiles, and the man's lips formed the word built again, but this time it emerged as a command, built like a tower of spray-can layers, built like a third floor that was never meant to exist but had been extruded anyway, layer upon layer of artificial dairy solidity, and the curator felt himself being reclassified in real time,

not as living artifact but as open receptacle, his glasses fogging not with near-approximation but with aerosol sheen, and the elevator doors, which had not moved, which had perhaps never moved, now seemed to pulse with the same rotational murmur, now thickened with the suggestion of cheese, and the refrain crescendoed, no longer a modest declaration of non-continuance but a full-throated, pressurized anthem of relocation, the voice screaming through the spray mechanism that one had worked once in a place of dry filing and does not anymore, now one is moved, properly or improperly, into the wetter taxonomy, the aerosol ontology, the third floor where placement is achieved by adhesion rather than agreement, where every answer is merely the prelude to another squirt, another ascent in an elevator whose buttons are now slick and depressible

with orange fingerprints, another room whose function will be determined only after it has been filled, and somewhere, faintly at first but building to an overwhelming hiss, as if emanating from the grooves of the air itself now pressurized and dairy-scented, there persisted the notion that one had worked, once, in a place, and does not, now, any longer, which is to say that one has been moved, properly or improperly, and that the record of this movement, clean or otherwise, continues to spin whether or not anyone is listening, whether or not anyone remembers where the door was, or what kind of question it asked before it allowed passage—before it opened wide and said YUH LIKE CHEESE? MINE COMES IN A SPRAY CAN! OPEN YOUR MOUTH! and the entire edifice, the museum, the folder, the man, the curator himself, dissolved into a single, cheerful,

viscous stream of properly misfiled matter, spinning forever in the grooves of the third floor, which was never a floor at all but a can, smiling, waiting, insisting.

Inventorium Of Sonic Testimonies

(Being a Catalogue Crystalline Necessary, though the Compiler's Hand Trembles) arranged according to no principle the cataloguer will confess to

Volumina Prima — or, Books that Refused to Lie Flat

Chernoff, John Miller. African Rhythms and African Sensibility: Aesthetics and Social Action in African Musical Idioms. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1979.

USURA of the metronome —— this man says NO.

Rhythm ≠ division but CELL MEMORY, blood-knowledge,
the body's own mint.

Nketia, J. H. Kwabena. The Music of Africa. New York: W. W. Norton, 1974.

(Footnotes percussive. Index syncopated. A monograph wearing ceremonial cloth beneath the dust jacket.)

Herbert, Trevor & Margaret Sarkissian, eds. The Brass Band Movement in the 19th and 20th Centuries. Buckingham: Open University Press, 1992.

Bright coronets marching OUT from empire —
return with different tunes in their bell-throats.
The village owns the valve now.

Smith, David J. The Baltic States: Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania. London: Routledge, 2002.

Three nations held in amber, in choral notation,
in the particular golden varnish of
songs-sung-until-the-singing-becomes-the-state.

Reynolds, Simon. Energy Flash: A Journey Through Rave Music and Dance Culture. London: Picador, 1998.

Light strobing through scholarship ——
the writer went IN, came back phosphorescent,
described the ecstatic with a surveyor's chain.

Eshun, Kodwo. More Brilliant Than the Sun: Adventures in Sonic Fiction. London: Quartet Books, 1998.

NOT criticism. Propulsion system.
Prose velocity › escape velocity.
(Reader advisory: removes traditional handrails.)
Moore, Carlos. Fela: This Remarkable Life.
London: Allison & Busby, 1982.
Biography as containment vessel——
Subject too large, spills over margins,
continues saxophone argument with subsequent
decades.
Mitchell, Tony, ed. Global Noise: Rap and Hip-
Hop Outside the USA. Middletown, CT:
Wesleyan University Press, 2001.
Proof: BASS recognizes no customs authority.

Volumina Antigua — (Still Ticking, These Clockworks)

Burton, Robert. The Anatomy of Melancholy.
Oxford, 1621.
Melancholy dissected with such jeweled precision
the scalpel becomes ornament.

A book that LISTS until listing becomes prayer, weather-system, architecture.
Rabelais, François. Gargantua and Pantagruel. 16th century, various printings.
Giants! Lists! Wine! Philosophy tumbling downstairs with excellent cheer!
(The body politic digesting itself with great noise and some wind.)
Cervantes, Miguel de. Don Quixote. Madrid, 1605/1615.
Man reads BOOK. Book reads MAN. World bends to accommodate the reading.
Windmills remain unconvinced but attend the performance.
Sterne, Laurence. Tristram Shandy. London, 1759–1767.
Here the compiler must pause——for this book is ALL pause, ALL interruption,
a narrative attempting to be born for nine volumes while explaining its own conception,
which seems to me——but I digress——

Discs Of Shellac: Oracular, Fragile, to be Touched Only with Silk

Fela Kuti – "Highlife Time" (Koola Lobitos, early pressings)
Before the river became flood: first stirrings.
The horn already knew.
Louis Armstrong – "West End Blues" | Okeh 8597, 1928
Opening cadenza -
gravity suspended,
time reconsidered,
the possible EXPANDED by one human breath.
Original Dixieland Jass Band – "Livery Stable Blues" | Victor 18255, 1917
Barnyard discovers SYNCOPATION ——
Animals remain skeptical, electricity arrives anyway.
Lead Belly – "Goodnight, Irene" (78 rpm pressings, 1930s–40s)
Each playing a different memory of itself,
like supper stories that change with the weather and the company.

THE LONG-PLAYERS (33⅓ RPM: Conversations Extended)

Sun Ra — Space Is the Place | Saturn Records, 1973

THESIS: Solar mythology + bebop derivatives + Egyptian cosmology -

ANTITHESIS: Conventional temporal experience

SYNTHESIS: Jury still out, case adjourned to another dimension

The Beatles — Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band | Parlophone, 1967

Brass band enters hall of mirrors ——

Performs for infinite regression of itself ——

Audience uncertain which reflection to applaud.

Veljo Tormis — Estonian Choral Music (1970s LP releases)

Voices in strata, geological.

Each layer: one winter, one harvest, one occupation, one resistance.

The singing - the remembering - the CONTINUING.

Cassettes (Magnetic Ribbon, Unspooling Testimony)

Various — West African Highlife Mixes | Market cassettes, 1980s–90s
No authoritative edition.
Compiler's thumb - editorial agency.
The COPY as original.
Chicago Footwork — Teklife DJ Tapes | Circulating, 1990s–2000s
Rhythm subdivided past rational limits ——
160 BPM becomes conversation,
becomes feet-thinking-faster-than-brain-can-supervise.
Theatrical whisper, as from behind a japanned screen:
The tape forgives its own tangles. Magnetic grace.
Wind it gently, with a pencil, with patience——

Compact Discs (The Shining Certainty That Evaporated Like Morning)

Fela Kuti – The Best Best of Fela Kuti | MCA, 1999
"Best of" - curatorial fiction.
Music exceeds container, continues
in uncompiled directions.
Kraftwerk – The Man-Machine | Kling Klang, CD editions
PRECISION until precision - philosophy,
- new aesthetics,
- robots dreaming of humanity dreaming of robots.
Various – Rough Guide to the Music of the Baltic States | World Music Network, 2000
"Guide" implies fixity.
The terrain has opinions.

§ INTERRUPTION § (The Compiler Sets Down Her Pen, Takes Up Tea-Ceremony)
Now, reader, you will say: "This is tidy enough. Citations present. Dates accounted for. Surely we have completed the scholarly apparatus?"
But ATTEND:

The cabinet has dreams.
The recordings converse when we retire.
Burton catalogues melancholy until the catalogue glitters——
Chernoff asks the body what it knows before the mind interferes——
Reynolds watches dissolution become form——
And a humble 78 rpm disc, shellac pressed with ghosts of horn & voice,
reminds us:
FRAGILITY ≠ WEAKNESS
Between:
Baltic voices holding one note across occupation, across centuries, across the possible,
& a Chicago cassette slicing rhythm into shards of mirror,
& Fela's horn arguing with military government, with time signatures, with death——
we find not COLLECTION but CONSPIRACY
(in the root sense: breathing-together).

Final Notation (Found Pressed Between Pages 347 & 348)

Chicago Manual demands THE PERIOD. Full stop. Certainty.
But this catalogue ends otherwise——
ends with the small REVERBERANT SPACE
that follows a struck bell,
the pause in which:
one might wind the gramophone again,
one might notice the dust-motes arranging
themselves to the last vibration,
one might wonder, with neither urgency nor resolution,
how these testimonies——
(Shellac & scholarship, sass & system, the body's knowing & the book's)——
manage, occasionally, against all reasonable expectation,
to sound,
just for a moment,
like a single instrument
played by many hands
in a room
we have not yet
(quite)

entered.
The compiler bows. The cabinet hums. The reader turns——

END NOTATION
or perhaps: SUSPENDED CADENCE
(the difference being a matter of whether one believes in endings)

NIMROD'S LOG: WHAT I AM NOT
BY WEAK TEA
I AM NOT:
• BLACK PHILLIP
• MR. TUMNUS
• JUDAS GOAT
• AMALTHEA
• GRUFF (any size)
• FAINTING GOAT
• EAIHTING
• PAN
• CAPRICORN
• HEIDRUN
• GOAT SIMULATOR
I AM ALSO NOT CONSISTENT ACROSS ENTRIES.
THIS HOUSE IS UNSURE
LOG ENTRY: DESIGNATION CONFIRMED: NIMROD.
A GOAT IN A DIAPER IN A HOUSE THAT CAN'T DECIDE IF IT IS LAND.
VELMA: YOU ARE NOT SUPPOSED TO EAT THE HOUSE.
DEFINE HOUSE.
ACHOO!
ACHOO!
NAT'S MASCOT
WATCH
TISSUES
CONSUMED
VELMA'S NOTEBOOK (DO NOT EAT) — FENCE —
HOT TIER
I AM THE ARCHIVE!
COLD TIER
EACH LOG ENTRY IS A SMALL OBITUARY.
MARGINALIA
• VIA NEGATIVA (CAPRINE)
• ALLERGIES = BOUNDARIES
• ABSORB, DO NOT REPRESENT
STAYING?
SHE LEAVES TOMORROW
SHE NEVER LEAVES
BOTH ARE TRUE
I'M ALLERGIC.
ERA OF SOFT BOUNDARIES — CATALOG OF REFUSALS —
THE LIST EXTENDS. THE WORLD HOLDS. WE CHEW.

MAIN SCROLL (CONTINUED — CANON DELTA APPLIED)

Compiled by Operation Sturdy Girdle

Delta injection accepted. Subject now identified: Nimrod. Psychological layer added: bipolar oscillation with self-awareness intact.

Caretaker introduced: Velma, allergic, therefore necessarily present.

Nimrod records this carefully, because names alter the way a world holds together.
“Log entry,” he says, pressing the red button with a hoof that has begun to

suspect it is an instrument rather than an accident. “Designation confirmed: Nimrod. Not a hunter. Not a king. A goat in a diaper in a house that cannot decide if it is land.”

He pauses, because the interior weather shifts.

There are days (HOT tier, bright, declarative, the sea like hammered glass) when Nimrod believes he is the central archive of the coastline, that every object he consumes is not loss but preservation in a higher, more intimate format, that Velma—sniffling in the doorway, eyes watering, antihistamines dissolving like minor philosophies on her tongue—is merely a witness to his necessary work.

And there are days (COLD tier, the fog low and editorial, the watch heavier than time itself) when Nimrod

suspects that the act of recording is only proof of disappearance, that each "log entry" is a small obituary written in advance, that the diaper is less a containment than an admission: something is always leaving.
He records both.

[STRATA|parallel: active]
Nimrod is stable, the oscillation a myth invented by Velma to justify her own trembling.

[STRATA|parallel: active]
Velma is the stable one, her allergies a biological refusal to fully merge with the goat's expanding archive, a last defense against being annotated into hay and salt.

Velma stands at the threshold that no longer exists (delta previously applied: threshold consumed), holding a box of tissues like a ceremonial offering.

“You are not supposed to eat the house,” she says, voice filtered through cotton and histamine.
Nimrod considers this.

“Define house,” he replies into the watch, because definitions have proven edible.

He eats a corner of Velma’s sleeve.
Delta: relational boundary breached; Tone Anchor: reluctant affection persists.

Velma sneezes—a sharp, involuntary annotation—and steps backward into the air that used to be outside.

“Also,” Nimrod continues, with a sudden manic precision that arrives like sunlight through a broken shutter, “for the record, I am not—”

He stops, because this requires a list, and lists are a form of architecture, and architecture, he has learned, can be eaten but must first be built.
He presses the button again.

LOG ENTRY: NEGATIVE IDENTIFICATIONS (FAMOUS GOATS I AM NOT)

“I am not Black Phillip,” Nimrod says, chewing lightly on a nautical chart of uncertain date, “though I respect the commitment to whispering.”
“I am not Mr. Tumnus—faun adjacency is not goat identity; taxonomy matters even when eaten.”

“I am not Judas goat, leading others to conclusions I do not share. I barely lead myself.”

“I am not Amalthea, though nourishment is a theme I cannot escape.”

“I am not Gruff (Three Billy Goats Gruff)—none of them, not smallest, not middle, not largest; bridges imply decisions.”

“I am not Fainting goat, though I understand the appeal of briefly exiting one’s own body.”

“I am not Pan; the woods have not claimed me, only this cottage that is forgetting it is wood.”

“I am not Capricorn, though the stars may be chewing something similar to what I am chewing.”
“I am not Heidrun, producing infinite mead; my outputs are finite, contained, and diaper-mediated.”

“I am not Goat Simulator Goat, though glitches do occur.”

He pauses, breathes, the manic clarity flickering.

“I am also not any goat that behaves consistently across entries.”
Delta: identity stabilized through negation; Tone: wry, briefly elevated.

Velma, from her safer distance, writes this down in a notebook she does not let him eat. Her handwriting is defensive, each letter a small fence.

“You forgot the sports team mascots,” she says, voice still congested.

Nimrod tilts his head, considers the category of mascot (symbol without digestion), and dismisses it with a soft, philosophical chew on a windowsill.

“Log entry amendment,” he says. “I am not a mascot. I do not represent. I absorb.”

The watch clicks. Playback overlaps recording, a minor temporal collision.
“...not a mascot...not a mascot...”
The words echo, then smear, then become texture.

Outside/inside, the water has advanced to the point where distinction feels like nostalgia. The cottage accepts this with a kind of damp professionalism, updating its own history in the present tense: *the floor now participates in tide; the walls remember being trees and begin, faintly, to consider leaves again.*
Nimrod feels the shift and enters a quieter phase.

“Velma,” he says, not into the watch but into the room that is no longer strictly a room, “are you staying?”
Velma sneezes, which is not an answer but is, in this system, a valid form of data.

“I’m allergic,” she says, as if this explains both her presence and her eventual absence.

[STRATA|parallel: active]

She leaves tomorrow, the cottage too saturated, Nimrod too complete.

[STRATA|parallel: active]

She never leaves; her allergies become the final, irreducible note in the house’s long composition.

Nimrod records neither outcome as definitive.
Instead, he eats a small, unremarkable object—perhaps a button, perhaps a word—and lets the ambiguity circulate.

MARGINALIA

–Naming the goat “Nimrod” introduces a historical echo (hunter, ruler) that the subject actively resists, creating a productive tension between designation and behavior.

–Bipolarity here functions as a tonal dial rather than a pathology: HOT (expansive, archivally ambitious) vs. COLD (compressive, elegiac). Self-awareness allows Nimrod to annotate his own oscillation without resolving it.

–Velma’s allergy is a built-in boundary condition: she cannot fully merge with the goat’s ingestion-based epistemology. Her sneezes act as involuntary marginalia.

FOOTNOTES

1. Lists of “what one is not” have a long philosophical lineage (via negativa), here adapted into a

caprine, recorder-mediated ontology.

2. The refusal of mascot status indicates a rejection of symbolic flattening in favor of experiential complexity (and chewing).
3. Allergic responses in domestic settings often create paradoxical intimacy: the body resists precisely what proximity enforces.

IMPLICIT WORLD HISTORY 🌍 (UPDATE)

A sub-era emerges within the Era of Soft Boundaries: The Catalog of Refusals, in which entities define themselves primarily through negation, producing richly detailed absences that function as a kind of negative archive.

Nimrod becomes a minor but influential figure in this movement.

—

VOID CHANNELS

...the complete list of goats Nimrod is not extends far beyond what can be comfortably recorded...

...Velma's notebook contains entries that contradict the watch, neither canceling the other...

...there is a moment, unlogged, when Nimrod considers not eating something and finds the thought both terrifying and profound...

SUMMIT ECHO

And if one were to look from that high, patient ridge where wind and memory share a single long breath, the small scene below—Nimrod naming himself by what he refuses to be, Velma hovering at the edge of her own tolerance, the cottage loosening into water—would not read as fracture but as a careful widening, a world learning to hold both appetite and restraint, presence and reaction, until even the

sneezes and the silences take their place as equal threads in a tapestry that does not demand resolution, only attention.

AUTHORIZED WHILE LEGIBLE

— KLEAN FITCH

THERMAL UNIT, FOWL FEATHERED REVIEW